

LITERARY GEMS.

VOL. I.

THE SWEETS OF MANY A FLOWER.

NO. 16.

THE VEILED PICTURE.

A story is told in the New Monthly, of an artist, and a picture he had in his studio carefully veiled with a green curtain. The essential portions of it are now transferred to the Atlas. It is related by a friend who had known the young painter at Rome, and who was much distressed at finding him, when they unexpectedly met in London, with every appearance of the loss of health and spirits—although his fame and fortunes were eminently flourishing. This friend sought his society, and was kindly received. The artist showed him, at various times, all his paintings, except the one we have mentioned. As his friend observed him constantly melancholy, and his health declining, he implored him to say what so wrought upon his spirits. At length, with much agitation, he replied—

"In my early youth I became acquainted with a young lady, whose beauty I will not eulogize, because you will soon have an opportunity of judging for yourself. I loved her; we were both young, but I was, by a few years, her senior; and in a short time she returned my affection with all the devotedness of woman's first love. We lived within a short distance of each other. My family had once moved in a sphere of the highest respectability, but misfortune had humbled them, and they were obliged to find associates in a different community. Her father had amassed a considerable fortune by the most industrious habits, and in his old age continued the same employment with as much perseverance as he had practised in his youth. As long as he saw his family comfortable, and his business productive, he cared not how the world went, and never interfered in domestic matters. Her mother was a vulgar and ignorant woman, of a tyrannical disposition, who considered wealth the only sign of respectability; she ruled every where. She took care that her children should be educated as well as money could make them, in the hope of their forming alliances that would increase her importance. Laura was the youngest of them all; it was strange that a form and nature of such rare workmanship should have been produced from such materials; but nature loves to disappoint the calculations of philosophers. She had but one brother, who was a few years older than herself; he was the counterpart of his mother in all things, and consequently her idol. It is almost needless to say that I was objected to by them; but this rather strengthened Laura's affection than the contrary, and we met clandestinely and corresponded through the agency of her servant.

"At a very early age I had given evidence of a talent for painting, and I was educated for that profession. I have already told you that my family had been unfortunate; another reverse of fortune occurred, which obliged them to leave that neighborhood for ever. At that time, having, I knew, nothing to depend upon but my own exertions, I thought that the world might suspect me of interested motives in retaining the affections of a young girl whose expectations were so far superior to my own; therefore, after a long and painful struggle with my feelings, I came to the determination of discontinuing the connexion rather than throw myself open to such debasing suspicions. I wrote, and resigned all claim to her hand and heart; as from my situation in society I was unable to offer her those advantages which I felt convinced she had a right to expect. Then, in language that can never fade from my memory, she replied—'When you have lost all affection for me, then, dearest Arthur, tell me that you cannot offer what I have a right to expect; and she who now feels happy in calling herself only your Laura, will no longer

style herself by so enviable a name.' This silenced my scruples, and I resigned myself to the delightful enjoyment of loving and being loved.

"Some envious wretch, like the Evil One, when he beheld the felicity of our first parents, had witnessed our happiness only with a design to mar it,—he told her family of our secret meetings. They were of course very much enraged, took advantage of Laura's absence to break open her writing-desk, and there discovered several of my letters. Laura was instantly sent for, overwhelmed with abuse, which she bore with the meekness of an angel, and made to indite a very angry letter to me, the purport of which was to reprove me for my presumption in daring to aspire to an alliance with her family, and to forbid any further correspondence. When I received it, it caused me much anxiety, and I began to believe in the general fickleness of womankind, but the next post brought me a letter full of womanly tenderness, and of words—

'Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath.'

It cleared up the mystery.

Although she was watched with the most rigid espionage, and suffered every indignity from the family, because she would not promise to renounce me, for two years we continued to correspond with, and at intervals to meet each other. She improved in beauty, and I in my profession. I studied long and earnestly for improvement, for I thought that only by attaining eminence I could prove myself worthy of her love. About this time her letters began to be less frequent, and our interviews at longer intervals. Yet in speech and in writing she seemed as kind as ever. At last she told me that our correspondence must be discontinued as her mother had quarrelled with the faithful servant by whose agency it had been carried on; and as she had been dismissed from her service, no letters of mine could come to her without being discovered; she concluded her letter by saying—'I allow that time does make changes, but it never—never will in my regard for you; and I tell you, dear Arthur, that while I can hear that you still remain firm in your affection to your Laura, no power on earth shall force me to give my hand to another. Although I could not but regret that the only channel of communication between us was no longer available, these assurances of her unalterable attachment convinced me of her sincerity, and I felt assured that the absence of my letters would make no difference in her regard for me. I placed the most unbounded confidence in her truth.'

As he concluded the sentence, Arthur linked his arm within mine, and led me before the picture, which I have noticed as the one concealed by a curtain.

"So deeply," he continued, "were her features fixed upon my memory, that wanting to paint a picture from the story of Abelard and Heloise, I made her as a study for the latter, and endeavoured to trace upon the canvass those charms which had made so lasting an impression on my heart. I had then no opportunity of seeing her, but she was ever in my thoughts; therefore, from memory I am indebted for the strong resemblance which the portrait bears to the original. There is no composition with which I have taken so much pains; I lingered over it like a mother over her first born; I touched, and re-touched it, and endeavoured to bestow upon it all the exquisite finish of a Gerard Dow. I have lately closed the painting from view, because it became too painful a mockery for me to bear.

With a trembling hand he drew aside the curtain, and I never beheld anything so lovely as the being before me; the atmosphere seemed to grow bright, as

if a burst of sunshine had flashed upon the room. Heloise was designed as rising from a couch, on which she had been reclining, while her lover, kneeling at her feet, had, in the passionate eloquence of verse, declared the eagerness of his love. Her hair was light and of a glossy hue, parted off her fair and open forehead, and rested in luxuriant tresses upon her dazzling throat and swelling breast; her eyes were of that deep rich blue that seem born of Heaven, from their resemblance to the fair clouds which veil it from our sight, and were filled with that deep and earnest expression of womanly tenderness that subdues the heart, on which it falls. Beauty seemed to breathe in the swelling outline of her form, and passion appeared to dwell in the melting fondness of her looks. Her dress was the picturesque costume of the twelfth century, allowing the graceful shape of the limbs to be seen beneath its folds. The room was decorated with tapestry, on which were delineated subjects from scriptural history, and the rich light which fell upon the eloquent features of Heloise, came mellowed through a window of painted glass, whereon a virgin and child were drawn in clear and fadeless colours.

I looked upon the painting with unconcealed rapture: it was a master-piece. It appeared to possess all the flowing richness of color which belongs to the Italian school, united with the exquisite finish of the Flemish painters. I think I should have gazed at it till nightfall, entranced in admiration, had I not been started by a heavy sigh. I hastily let fall the curtain, and turned round, my friend had sunk into a seat; his face was buried in his hands, and his attenuated frame shook with violent convulsions.

"Arthur!" said I, taking his thin hand in mine, "what ails you?"

"Nothing," he replied, faintly, catching his breath at intervals, as if something impeded his respiration, "nothing—nothing—my friend; 'tis a slight attack to which I am sometimes subject, but it will soon be over; there—there—I am better now—I am much better—I will now go on with my narrative."

"No, no, Arthur," I exclaimed, observing the agitation he was endeavoring to control, "you can continue it at some other time."

"Perhaps not, my friend—perhaps not," he replied; "I dare not trifle with time." He made a violent effort to conquer his weakness, and then, with assumed composure, continued. "Soon afterwards my productions attracted the attention of a certain nobleman, well known for the liberality with which he patronizes the fine arts, and he was so pleased with my compositions, that, after a short acquaintance, he offered, at his own expense, to send me to Italy to pursue my studies. This was a temptation I could not resist, and I soon accepted his generous offer. Although I sought frequently, I found no opportunity of having an interview with Laura before I left England; but when I arrived in Rome I determined to confine myself to one object, that of rising in my profession, for the sole purpose of becoming worthy of her affection. The name of my noble patron was a passport to every palazzo in Rome, and I quickly availed myself of its influence. I studied the glorious creations of the antique till I felt imbued with the spirit of their beauty, and the immortal designs of the great painters I had before my eyes, till I became familiar with every excellence they possessed. There I found the best living models to draw from—women as lovely as the Madonnas of Raffaele, and men as finely shaped as the Deities of Canova.

"Three years I remained in Italy, seeking for eminence, and in some degree—in a degree which gave me a proud and happy consciousness of having suc-

LITERARY GEMS.

VOL. I.

THE SWEETS OF MANY A FLOWER.

NO. 16.

THE VEILED PICTURE.

A story is told in the *New Monthly*, of an artist, and a picture he had in his studio carefully veiled with a green curtain. The essential portions of it are now transferred to the *Atlas*. It is related by a friend who had known the young painter at Rome, and who was much distressed at finding him, when they unexpectedly met in London, with every appearance of the loss of health and spirits—although his fame and fortunes were eminently flourishing. This friend sought his society, and was kindly received. The artist showed him, at various times, all his paintings, except the one we have mentioned. As his friend observed him constantly melancholy, and his health declining, he implored him to say what so wrought upon his spirits. At length, with much agitation, he replied—

"In my early youth I became acquainted with a young lady, whose beauty I will not eulogize, because you will soon have an opportunity of judging for yourself. I loved her; we were both young, but I was, by a few years, her senior; and in a short time she returned my affection with all the devotedness of woman's first love. We lived within a short distance of each other. My family had once moved in a sphere of the highest respectability, but misfortune had humbled them, and they were obliged to find associates in a different community. Her father had amassed a considerable fortune by the most industrious habits, and in his old age continued the same employment with as much perseverance as he had practised in his youth. As long as he saw his family comfortable, and his business productive, he cared not how the world went, and never interfered in domestic matters. Her mother was a vulgar and ignorant woman, of a tyrannical disposition, who considered wealth the only sign of respectability; she ruled every where. She took care that her children should be educated as well as money could make them, in the hope of their forming alliances that would increase her importance. Laura was the youngest of them all; it was strange that a form and nature of such rare workmanship should have been produced from such materials; but nature loves to disappoint the calculations of philosophers. She had but one brother, who was a few years older than herself; he was the counterpart of his mother in all things, and consequently her idol. It is almost needless to say that I was objected to by them; but this rather strengthened Laura's affection than the contrary, and we met clandestinely and corresponded through the agency of her servant.

"At a very early age I had given evidence of a talent for painting, and I was educated for that profession. I have already told you that my family had been unfortunate; another reverse of fortune occurred, which obliged them to leave that neighborhood for ever. At that time, having, I knew, nothing to depend upon but my own exertions, I thought that the world might suspect me of interested motives in retaining the affections of a young girl whose expectations were so far superior to my own; therefore, after a long and painful struggle with my feelings, I came to the determination of discontinuing the connexion rather than throw myself open to such debasing suspicions. I wrote, and resigned all claim to her hand and heart; as from my situation in society I was unable to offer her those advantages which I felt convinced she had a right to expect. Then, in language that can never fade from my memory, she replied—'When you have lost all affection for me, then, dearest Arthur, tell me that you cannot offer what I have a right to expect; and she who now feels happy in calling herself only your Laura, will no longer

style herself by so enviable a name.' This silenced my scruples, and I resigned myself to the delightful enjoyment of loving and being loved.

"Some envious wretch, like the Evil One, when he beheld the felicity of our first parents, had witnessed our happiness only with a design to mar it,—he told her family of our secret meetings. They were of course very much enraged, took advantage of Laura's absence to break open her writing-desk, and there discovered several of my letters. Laura was instantly sent for, overwhelmed with abuse, which she bore with the meekness of an angel, and made to indite a very angry letter to me, the purport of which was to reprove me for my presumption in daring to aspire to an alliance with her family, and to forbid any further correspondence. When I received it, it caused me much anxiety, and I began to believe in the general fickleness of womankind, but the next post brought me a letter full of womanly tenderness, and of words—

'Sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath.'

It cleared up the mystery.

Although she was watched with the most rigid espionage, and suffered every indignity from the family, because she would not promise to renounce me, for two years we continued to correspond with, and at intervals to meet each other. She improved in beauty, and I in my profession. I studied long and earnestly for improvement, for I thought that only by attaining eminence I could prove myself worthy of her love. About this time her letters began to be less frequent, and our interviews at longer intervals. Yet in speech and in writing she seemed as kind as ever. At last she told me that our correspondence must be discontinued as her mother had quarrelled with the faithful servant by whose agency it had been carried on; and as she had been dismissed from her service, no letters of mine could come to her without being discovered; she concluded her letter by saying—'I allow that time does make changes, but it never—never will in my regard for you; and I tell you, dear Arthur, that while I can hear that you still remain firm in your affection to your Laura, no power on earth shall force me to give my hand to another. Although I could not but regret that the only channel of communication between us was no longer available, these assurances of her unalterable attachment convinced me of her sincerity, and I felt assured that the absence of my letters would make no difference in her regard for me. I placed the most unbounded confidence in her truth.'

As he concluded the sentence, Arthur linked his arm within mine, and led me before the picture, which I have noticed as the one concealed by a curtain.

"So deeply," he continued, "were her features fixed upon my memory, that wanting to paint a picture from the story of *Abelard and Heloise*, I made her as a study for the latter, and endeavoured to trace upon the canvass those charms which had made so lasting an impression on my heart. I had then no opportunity of seeing her, but she was ever in my thoughts; therefore, from memory I am indebted for the strong resemblance which the portrait bears to the original. There is no composition with which I have taken so much pains; I lingered over it like a mother over her first born; I touched, and re-touched it, and endeavoured to bestow upon it all the exquisite finish of a *Gerard Dow*. I have lately closed the painting from view, because, it became too painful a mockery for me to bear.

With a trembling hand he drew aside the curtain, and I never beheld anything so lovely as the being before me; the atmosphere seemed to grow bright, as

if a burst of sunshine had flashed upon the room. *Heloise* was designed as rising from a couch, on which she had been reclining, while her lover, kneeling at her feet, had, in the passionate eloquence of verse, declared the eagerness of his love. Her hair was light and of a glossy hue, parted off her fair and open forehead, and rested in luxuriant tresses upon her dazzling throat and swelling breast; her eyes were of that deep rich blue that seem born of Heaven, from their resemblance to the fair clouds which veil it from our sight, and were filled with that deep and earnest expression of womanly tenderness that subdues the heart, on which it falls. Beauty seemed to breathe in the swelling outline of her form, and passion appeared to dwell in the melting fondness of her looks. Her dress was the picturesque costume of the twelfth century, allowing the graceful shape of the limbs to be seen beneath its folds. The room was decorated with tapestry, on which were delineated subjects from scriptural history, and the rich light which fell upon the eloquent features of *Heloise*, came mellowed through a window of painted glass, whereon a virgin and child were drawn in clear and fadeless colours.

I looked upon the painting with unconcealed rapture: it was a master-piece. It appeared to possess all the flowing richness of color which belongs to the Italian school, united with the exquisite finish of the Flemish painters. I think I should have gazed at it till nightfall, entranced in admiration, had I not been started by a heavy sigh. I hastily let fall the curtain, and turned round, my friend had sunk into a seat; his face was buried in his hands, and his attenuated frame shook with violent convulsions.

"Arthur!" said I, taking his thin hand in mine, "what ails you?"

"Nothing," he replied, faintly, catching his breath at intervals, as if something impeded his respiration, "nothing—nothing—my friend; 'tis a slight attack to which I am sometimes subject, but it will soon be over; there—there—I am better now—I am much better—I will now go on with my narrative."

"No, no, Arthur," I exclaimed, observing the agitation he was endeavoring to control, "you can continue it at some other time."

"Perhaps not, my friend—perhaps not," he replied; "I dare not trifle with time." He made a violent effort to conquer his weakness, and then, with assumed composure, continued. "Soon afterwards my productions attracted the attention of a certain nobleman, well known for the liberality with which he patronizes the fine arts, and he was so pleased with my compositions, that, after a short acquaintance, he offered, at his own expense, to send me to Italy to pursue my studies. This was a temptation I could not resist, and I soon accepted his generous offer. Although I sought frequently, I found no opportunity of having an interview with Laura before I left England; but when I arrived in Rome I determined to confine myself to one object, that of rising in my profession, for the sole purpose of becoming worthy of her affection. The name of my noble patron was a passport to every palazzo in Rome, and I quickly availed myself of its influence. I studied the glorious creations of the antique till I felt imbued with the spirit of their beauty, and the immortal designs of the great painters I had before my eyes, till I became familiar with every excellence they possessed. There I found the best living models to draw from—women as lovely as the *Madonnas* of *Raffaello*, and men as finely shaped as the *Deities* of *Canova*.

"Three years I remained in Italy, seeking for eminence, and in some degree—in a degree which gave me a proud and happy consciousness of having suc-

ceeded in my endeavors—I obtained it. Yet Laura was never absent from my remembrance. I fed my heart with hopes of creating a name and fortune worthy her acceptance. I yearned for distinction, only for her sake. I was happy with the world and with all around me. I had obtained honors and rewards above my expectations, and I looked forward to the possession of Laura as the crowning gift which would give a value to the rest. She was present with me at all times, and in all places, and shed a line of beauty and excellence over all I did. If I wanted to design any figure possessing extraordinary grace, I thought of her, and creations of more than earth-born loveliness rose upon the canvass. It was her to whom I looked for inspiration; and all bright thoughts and glorious imaginings were centered in her remembrance. Visions of beauty thronged upon my mind, freshly bathed in the sunshine of her delicious smiles, or newly glorified by the soft brilliance of her enamoured eyes.

"The time drew near for my return to England, and I busied myself, during my voyage home, with delightful anticipations of my coming felicity. I thought of the joy with which she would welcome me after so long a separation, and seemed to behold the lustre of her dove-like eyes dwelling fondly on my own. I hailed the white cliffs of Dover, shining through the mist, for bringing me nearer to her presence. My fame had travelled before me; and I discovered when I landed, that I was in as high estimation among my fellow-countrymen, as had followed my efforts in Italy. At the first opportunity I made inquiries for Laura and her family. I found that her father had died during my absence, leaving an immense fortune to be divided amongst his widow and children, who, with the exception of the son, had retired into the country. It was sometime before I found out her residence, and when it was discovered, I had still greater difficulty in seeing her. At last I met her by accident in town. She appeared glad to see me, pressed my hand with ecstasy, and looked up into my face with all her usual tenderness; yet, afterwards, she blushed, hung down her head in silence, and seemed fearful of being seen in my company. I would not leave her until she had given me permission to write to her, and had received her promise to answer me. I was too much wrapped up in the happiness I felt in her society, short as the period was in which we were together, to observe, at the time, those signs of estrangement, which afterwards came before my memory with all the bitterness of disappointment. My friend—it was the last time we met!"

In the few last sentences his voice faltered, and at the conclusion it was so broken as to be scarcely audible; but, with a supernatural energy, he struggled with his feelings, and, in a few minutes, resumed his narrative with apparent composure.

"I wrote," he continued—"yes, I wrote to her; I told her how long I had loved her—how faithful had been my affection, and that my attachment could only cease with my existence. That to me all the glory I had obtained was worthless, unless she for whom only it was sought made it valuable by sharing it with me; and I implored her, by all her gentle endearments, and by all the happy moments we had passed in each other's society, to assure me, at once, either of the certainty of my happiness, or of my misery. I waited long and anxiously for an answer. When any suspicion entered my mind of her inconstancy, I thought of all she had endured for my sake. I recalled to mind the letter she had written to me from the country, where she had been sent by her friends for the purpose of preventing any communication between us, in which she stated that the persecutions of her relations had become quite insupportable, and the waters of a lake, round which she was in the habit of walking, looked so clear, so tranquil, and so beautiful, that she had been tempted to put an end to her misery and her existence at once; but that the thoughts of possessing

my love held her back. Yes, I thought of these things, and my heart smote me for suspecting her of deceit. I waited without a murmur; laid the fault of the delay on a variety of different causes, and felt assured of my coming happiness. My friend! imagine my feelings when I received this letter."

With a trembling hand he gave me a note which appeared much crumpled, and felt damp to the touch; it was dated more than three months back, and I read as follows:—

"You have, perhaps, before this, accused me of neglect for not having answered your note before, but I have been unable to do so. Your letter was what might have been expected from you—noble and disinterested. I am grateful for your kind affection for me, though I can never repay it as you merit. Forget me, Arthur—I ask you to forget me; I am still your friend, and shall never cease to be so, but you will meet with those more likely to make you happy: you can then remember me as the friend of your adversity, and as one who would never have forsaken you in the day of trouble.

"Your sincere well wisher,

"LAURA."

I was wondering, within myself, at the extraordinary fickleness of this girl, when my friend, with more composure than I could have expected from him, proceeded:

"When I had perused that letter," he continued, "its meaning came with such a sudden shock upon my brain, as to derange, at once, every faculty it possessed; I was sensible only of a sudden and intense pain about the region of the heart. The rest I heard from my attendants; they were alarmed by hearing a noise in my room; they rushed in and found me extended on the floor. For several months I was delirious; my life was despaired of; but I recovered to the state in which you now see me, to linger by a painful and declining death. What are to me fame, and name, and honor, and glory, now she for whom I sought them requires them not? What are to me the riches of the world, now her for whom I struggled to obtain them, refuses to share them with me? I have no occupation—I have no incentive to occupation. The world holds out to me no prize worth struggling for, and the stimulus of earthly passions has no power over me. I am wasting away, gradually, but surely; all the functions of the body have lost their energy, though the soul still lives in the immortality of its youth."

I went home in a most melancholy state of mind from hearing my friend's eventful history. The next morning I called upon him at an early hour. I had left him tranquil and resigned; indeed, I felt surprised and delighted at his composure. When I was taking my leave, he pressed my hand with more than his usual kindness of manner, while the tears were tracing their way along his haggard cheeks. I knocked at the door as I recalled these things to my mind; the servant opened it; his looks alarmed me; I rushed up stairs into my friend's bed-room, and there I beheld the unhappy man extended lifeless on his bed! On the table, near him, lay a small bottle, which had contained poison of the deadliest nature. I saw how bitterly I had been deceived by his composure on the previous evening; he had evidently premeditated self-destruction, and had assumed tranquility to avoid suspicion. He seemed to have died without a struggle. As I was examining the corpse, I observed something glittering between its bony fingers; it was a gold locket, containing her hair, and on the back of it was engraved the name of Laura.—He died as he had lived.

I witnessed the last honors paid to his remains, and then proceeded to examine his papers. He left his pictures to be sold for the benefit of his relations, except a few, which he bequeathed to me as a testimony of his friendship; and one, which was "the Veiled Picture," he begged me to take to Laura, after he was

buried, and to give into her hands at the same time, the following letter:—

"I do not write either to complain or to reproach; I am as much above the one as I am superior to the other. Before these lines meet your gaze, the hand which now traces them will be cold, and the heart from whence they spring will have ceased to hold communion with the world: the dead complain of no injuries, and feel no wrongs. I write to assure you of my forgiveness, and that my last words may express, with heart and soul, and in spirit and in truth—God bless you!"

ARTHUR."

With some difficulty I discovered her dwelling, and learnt that she was going to be married the following week. After asking for the young lady, I was told by the servant she would be with me immediately, and was desired to walk into a handsomely decorated room, I placed the picture in the most advantageous light, and awaited her coming. In a short time she appeared. She was fully as beautiful as she had been described; but there was a trace of melancholy in the features of the original, which the portrait did not possess. I wondered not at the infatuation of my unfortunate friend, as I gazed on the charms with which this Circe had bound his existence in her love. I said nothing to her, fearing to trust my voice in her presence, but gently undrew the curtain of the picture. As soon as she beheld it, a flood of sweet recollections seemed to rush upon her heart, and her whole soul appeared absorbed in the scene before her. As she gazed upon it, she drew in her breath eagerly, so as to make her respiration distinctly audible, and her looks were expressive of the most intense interest. I gently put into her hand the letter; she took it almost mechanically, but without taking the least notice of my presence; her eyes fell upon the characters, which she recognized and read. As soon as she had perused it through, she turned her gaze upon me with a glassiness of eye that rivetted me to the spot. Her beautiful mouth became momentarily distorted; her lovely features underwent a sudden and complete transformation, expressive of deep and silent agony—she dropped the letter at my feet—uttered a long and horrid laugh, and sunk down upon the floor in violent hysterics.

For several days she was in a state of raving madness; and though the fit left her in a precarious state of weakness, on her first return to sensibility she sent for me. She bade me relate to her all I knew of her lover. I did so; and she continually interrupted my narration with execrations on her cruelty and falsehood. After she had heard me out, she told me she was the victim of her mother's ambition. During Arthur's absence, she had tried every scheme to thrust him from her affections, and to bring about a marriage which she considered more advantageous. She had succeeded but too well. Laura's heart had been humbled by threats, and her life had been rendered miserable by unkindness. Receiving no intelligence of her lover, in a moment of weakness she agreed to all her mother proposed. She now exclaimed against her inhumanity, her falsehood, and her treachery, and accused herself of being the murderer of her lover.—Although great attention was paid to her by her friends, she received a shock from which she never recovered; and before the day arrived which was to have seen her a bride, the grave possessed all that remained of one of the loveliest forms that death had ever disrobed of beauty.

W.

MINIATURES.—The monks who practised this style of art in illuminating missals and other manuscripts were called *illuminatores*, and also *miniatores*,—from the quantity of *minium* used by them, red being a predominant colour in their compositions. Hence, according to some, the origin of the term miniature; but, perhaps, ninety-nine persons in a hundred would be content with the more obvious derivation and meaning assigned to it by Shakspeare—a *minute picture*; a "portrait in little."

HOW TO WRITE A FASHIONABLE NOVEL.

[Mr. Arthur Ansard's Chambers. Mr. Ansard, with his eyes fixed upon the wig block, gnawing the feather end of his pen. The table covered with sundry sheets of foolscap, gives strong evidence of the Novel progressing.]

Ansard, (solus.)

Where is Barnstable? If he do not come soon, I shall have finished my novel without a heroine.—Well, I'm not the first person who has been foiled by a woman. (Continues to gnaw his pen in a brown study.)

Barnstable enters unperceived, and slaps Ansard on the shoulder. The latter starts up.

Mr. B.—So friend Ansard, making your dinner off your pen: it is not every novel writer who can contrive to do that even in anticipation. Have you profited by my instructions?

Arthur.—I wish I had. I assure you that this light diet has not contributed, as might be expected, to assist a heavy head; and one feather is not sufficient to enable my genius to take wing. If the public knew what dull work it is to write a novel, they would not be surprised at finding them dull reading. *Ex nihilo, nihil fit.* Barnstable, I am at the very pathos of stupidity.

Mr. B.—You certainly were absorbed when I entered, for I introduced myself.

Arthur.—I wish you had introduced another personage with you—you would have been doubly welcome.

Mr. B.—Who is that?

Arthur.—My heroine. I have followed your instructions to the letter. My hero is as listless as I fear my readers will be, and he is not yet in love. In fact he is only captivated with himself. I have made him dismiss Coridon.

Mr. B.—Hah! how did you manage that?

Arthur.—He was sent to ascertain the arms on the panel of a carriage. In his eagerness to execute his master's wishes, he came home with a considerable degree of perspiration on his brow, for which offence he was immediately put out of doors.

Mr. B.—Bravo—it was unpardonable—but still—

Arthur.—O! I know what you mean—that is all arranged, he has an annuity of one hundred pounds per annum.

Mr. B.—My dear Ansard, you have exceeded my expectations; but now for the heroine.

Arthur.—Yes, indeed; help me—for I have exhausted all my powers.

Mr. B.—It certainly requires much tact to present your heroine to your readers. We are unfortunately denied what the ancients were so happy to possess, a whole *cortège* of divinities that might be summoned to help any great personage in, or the author out of, a difficulty; but since we cannot command their assistance, like the man in the play who forgot his part, we will do without it. Now, have you thought of nothing new, for we must not plagiarise even from fashionable novels.

Arthur.—I have thought—and thought—and can find nothing new, unless we bring her in a whirlwind—that has not yet been attempted.

Mr. B.—A whirlwind—I don't know—that's hazardous. Nevertheless, if she were placed on a beetling cliff, overhanging the tempestuous ocean, lashing the rocks with its wild surge. Of a sudden, after she has been permitted to finish her soliloquy, a white cloud rising rapidly and unnoticed—the sudden vacuum—the rush of mighty winds through the majestic and alpine scenery—the vortex gathering round her—first admiring the vast efforts of nature, then astonished, and lastly alarmed, as she finds herself compelled to perform involuntary gyrations, till at length she spins round like a well-whipped top, nearing the dangerous edge of the precipice. It is bold—and certainly quite novel—I think it will do. Portray her delicate little feet, peeping out, pointing downwards,

the force of the elements raising her on her tip toes, now touching, now disdaining the earth. Her dress expanded wide like that of Herbele in her last and best pirouette—round, round she goes—her white arms are tossed frantically in the air. Corinna never threw herself into more graceful attitudes. Now is seen her diminishing angle—now the rounded symmetry,—mustn't go too high up though,—the wind increases—her distance from the edge of the precipice decreases—she has no breath left to shriek—no power to fall—threatened to be ravished by the wild and powerful god of the elements—she is discovered by the Honourable Augustus Bouverie, who has just finished his soliloquy upon another adjacent hill. He delights in her danger—before he rushes to her rescue, makes one pause for the purpose of admiration, and another for the purpose of adjusting his shirt collar.

Arthur.—The devil he does!

Mr. B.—To be sure. The hero of a fashionable novel never loses caste. Whether in a storm, a whirlwind, up to his neck in the foaming ocean, or tumbling down a precipice, he is still the elegant and correct Honourable Augustus Bouverie. To punish you for the interruption, I have a great mind to make him take a pinch of snuff before he starts. Well—he flies to her assistance, is himself caught in the rushing vortex, which prevents him from getting nearer to the lady, and despite of himself, takes to whirling in the opposite direction. They approach—they recede—she shrieks without being heard—holds out her arms for help—she would drop them in despair, but cannot, for they are twisted over her head by the tremendous force of the element. One moment they are near to each other, and the next they are separated; at one instant they are close to the abyss, and the waters below roar in delight of their anticipated victims, and in the next, a favouring change of the vortex increases their distance from the danger—there they spin—and there you may leave them, and commence a new chapter.

Arthur.—But is not all this naturally and physically impossible?

Mr. B.—By no means; there is nothing supernatural in a whirlwind, and the effect of a whirlwind is to twist every thing round. Why should the heroine and the Honourable Augustus Bouverie not be submitted to the laws of nature? besides we are writing a fashionable novel. Wild and improbable as this whirlwind may appear, it is within the range of probability; whereas, that is not at all adhered to in many novels—witness the drinking scene in Vivian Grey, and others equally *outré*, in which the author, having turned probability out of doors, ends by throwing possibility out of the window—leaving folly and madness to usurp their place—and play a thousand antics for the admiration of the public, who, pleased with novelty, cry out, "How fine!"

Arthur.—Buy the book, and laud the author.

Mr. B.—Exactly. Now having left your hero and heroine in a situation peculiarly interesting, with the greatest nonchalance, pass over to the continent, rave on the summit of Mont Blanc, and descend upon the strata which compose the mountains of the Moon in central Africa. You have been philosophical, now you must be geological. No one can then say that your book is light reading.

Arthur.—That can be said of few novels. In most of them even smoke assumes the ponderosity of lead.

Mr. B.—There is a metal still heavier, which they have the power of creating—gold—to pay a dunning tailor's bill.

Arthur.—But after having been philosophical and geological, ought one not to be a little moral?

Mr. B.—Pshaw! I thought you had more sense.—The great art of novel writing is to make the vices glorious, by placing them in close alliance with redeeming qualities. Depend upon it, Ansard, there is a deeper, more heartfelt satisfaction than mere amusement in novel reading; a satisfaction no less

real, because we will not own it to ourselves; the satisfaction of seeing all our favourite and selfish ideas dressed up in a garb so becoming, that we persuade ourselves that our false pride is proper dignity, our ferocity courage, our cowardice prudence, our irreligion liberality, and our baser appetites mere gallantry.

Arthur.—Very true, Barnstable; but really I do not like this whirlwind.

Mr. B.—Well, well, I give it up then; it was your own idea. We'll try again. Cannot you create some difficulty or dilemma, in which to throw her, so that the hero may come to her rescue with *eclat*.

Arthur.—Her grey palfrey takes fright.

Mr. B.—So will your readers; stale—quite stale!

Arthur.—A wild bull has his horns close to her, and is about to toss her.

Mr. B.—As your book would be—away with contempt. Vapid—quite vapid!

Arthur.—A shipwreck—the waves are about to close over her.

Mr. B.—Your book would be closed at the same moment—worn out—quite worn out.

Arthur.—In the dead of the night, a fire breaks out—she is already in the midst of the flames—

Mr. B.—Where your book would also be, by the disgusted reader; worse and worse.

Arthur.—Confound it—you will not allow me to expose her to earth, air, fire, or water. I have a great mind to hang her in her garters, and make the hero come and cut her down.

Mr. B.—You might do worse—and better.

Arthur.—What—hang myself?

Mr. B.—That certainly would put an end to all your difficulties, and all the dunning of your tailor. But, Ansard, I think I can put your heroine in a situation really critical, and eminently distressing, and the hero shall come to her relief, like the descent of a god to the rescue of a Greek or Trojan warrior.

Arthur.—Or of Bacchus to Ariadne in her distress.

Mr. B.—Perhaps a better simile. The consequence will be, that eternal gratitude in the bosom of the maiden will prove the parent of eternal love, which eternity of passion will, of course, last until they are married.

Arthur.—I'm all attention.

Mr. B.—Get up a splendid dinner party for their first casual meeting. Place the company at table.

Arthur.—Surely you are not going to choke her with the bone of a chicken.

Mr. B.—You surely are about to murder me, as Sampson did the Philistines—

Arthur.—With the jaw-bone of a fashionable novel writer, you mean.

Mr. B.—Exactly. But to proceed—they are seated at table; can you describe a grand dinner?

Arthur.—Certainly, I have partaken of more than one.

Mr. B.—Where?

Arthur.—I once sat down three hundred strong at the Freemason's Tavern.

Mr. B.—Pshaw! a mere hog feed.

Arthur.—Well, then, I dined with the late lord mayor.

Mr. B.—Still worse. My dear Ansard, it is however of no consequence. Nothing is more difficult to attain, yet nothing is more easy to describe, than a good dinner. I was once reading a very fashionable novel by a very fashionable bookseller, for the author is a mere nonentity, and was very much surprised at the accuracy with which a good dinner was described. The mystery was explained a short time afterwards, when casually taking up Eustache Eude's book in Sam's library, I found that the author had copied it out exactly from the injunctions of that celebrated gastronome. You can borrow the book.

Arthur.—Well, we will suppose that done; but I am all anxiety to know what is the danger from which the hero is to be rescued.

Mr. B.—I will explain. There are two species of existence, which is of little consequence, provided, like Caesar, the hero and heroine die decently: the other is of much greater consequence, which is fashionable existence. Let them once lose caste in that respect, and they are virtually dead, and one mistake, one oversight, is a death-blow for which there is no remedy, and from which there is no recovery. For instance, we will suppose our heroine to be quite confounded with the appearance of our hero—to have become *distraite, recuse*—and, in short, to have lost her recollection and presence of mind. She has been assisted to *fillet de soles au ravigotte*. The only sauce ever taken with them is *au macedoine*—this is offered to her, and, at the same time, another, which to eat with the above dish would be unheard of. In her distraction she is about to take the wrong sauce—actually at the point of ruining herself forever, and committing suicide upon her fashionable existence, while the keen grey eyes of Sir Aninous Antibes, the arbiter of fashion, are fixed upon her. At this awful moment, which is forever to terminate her fashionable existence, the Honourable Augustus Bouverie, who sits next to her, gently touches her seduisante sleeve, blandly smiling, he whispers to her that the other is the sauce *macedoine*. She perceives her mistake, trembles at her danger, rewards him with a smile, which penetrates into the deepest recesses of his heart, helps herself to the right sauce, darts a look of contemptuous triumph upon Sir Aninous Antibes, and while she is dipping her sole into the sauce, her soul expands with gratitude and love.

Arthur.—I see, I see. Many thanks; my heroine is now a fair counterpart of my hero.

"Ah, were a pair were never seen,
So justly formed to meet by nature."

Mr. B.—And now I'll give you another hint, since you appear grateful. It is a species of clap-trap in a novel, which always takes—to wit, a rich old uncle or misanthrope, who at the very time that he is bitterly offended and disgusted with the hero, who is in awkward circumstances, pulls out a pocket-book and counts down, say fifteen or twenty thousand pounds in bank notes, to relieve him from his difficulties.—An old coat and monosyllables will increase the interest.

Arthur.—True, (*sighing*.) Alas! there are no such uncles in real life; I wish there were.

Mr. B.—I beg your pardon; I know no time in which my uncle forks out more bank notes than at the present.

Arthur.—Yes, but it is for value, or more than value, received.

Mr. B.—That I grant; but I'm afraid it is the only uncle left now, except in a fashionable novel. But you comprehend the value of this new auxiliary.

Arthur.—Nothing can be better. Barnstable, you are really —, but I say no more. If a truly great man cannot be flattered with delicacy, it must not be attempted at all; silence then becomes the best tribute. Your advice proves you to be truly great. I am silent, therefore you understand the full force of the oratory of my thanks.

Mr. B. (*bowing*).—Well, Ansard, you have found out the cheapest way of paying off your bills of gratitude, I ever heard of. "Poor, even in thanks," was well said by Shakespeare; but you, it appears, are rich, in having nothing wherewith to pay. If you could transfer the same doctrine to your tradesmen, you need not write novels.

Arthur.—Alas! my dear fellow, mine is not yet written. There is one important feature, nay, the most important feature of all—the style of language, the diction—on that Barnstable, you have not yet dominated.

Mr. B. (*pompously*).—When Demosthenes was asked what were the three principal attributes of eloquence, he answered, that the first was action; on

being asked what was the second, he replied, action; and the third, action; and such is the idea of the Irish members in the House of Commons. Now there are three important requisites in the diction of a fashionable novel. The first, my dear fellow, is—slippancy; the second, slippancy; and slippancy is also the third. With the dull it will pass for wit, with some it will pass for scorn, and even the witty will not be enabled to point out the difference, without running the risk of being considered invidious. It will cover every defect with a defect still greater; for who can call small beer tasteless when it is sour, or dull when it is bottled and has a froth upon it?

Arthur.—The advice is excellent; but I fear that this slippancy is as difficult to acquire as the tone of true eloquence.

Mr. B.—Difficult! I defy the writers of the silver-fork school to write out of the style slippant. Read but one volume of —, and you will be saturated with it; but if you wish to go to the fountain-head, do as have done most of the late fashionable novel writers, repair to their instructors—the lady's-maid, for slippancy in the vein *spirituelle*; to a London footman for the vein critical; but, if you wish a slippancy of a still higher order, at once more solemn and more empty, which I would call the vein political, read the speeches of some of the Whig members of Parliament. Only read them; I wish no man so ill as to inflict upon him the torture of hearing them—read them, I say, and you will have taken the very highest degree in the order of igne slippancy.

Arthur.—I see at once. Your observations are as true as severe. When we would harangue geese, we must condescend to hiss; but still, my dear Barnstable, though you have fully proved to me that in a fashionable novel all plot is unnecessary, don't you think there ought to be a catastrophe, or sort of a kind of 'an end to the work, or the reader may be brought up short, or as the sailors say, "all standing," when he comes to the word "Finis," and exclaim with an air of stupefaction,—"And then—"

Mr. B.—And then, if he did, it would be no more than the fool deserved. I don't know whether it would not be advisable to leave off in the middle of a sentence, of a word, nay of a syllable, if it be possible; I'm sure the winding up would be better than the lackadaisical running-down of most of the fashionable novels. Snap the mainspring of your watch, and none but an ass can expect you to tell by it what it is o'clock; snap the thread of your narrative in the same way, and he must be an unreasonable being who can expect a reasonable conclusion. Finish thus, in a case of delicate distress; say, "The honourable Mr. Augustus Bouverie was struck in a heap with horror. He rushed with a frantic grace, a deliberate haste, and a graceful awkwardness, and whispered in her ear these dread and awful words, 'It is TOO LATE!'" Follow up with a — and Finis.

Arthur.—I see; the fair and agitated reader will pass a sleepless night in endeavouring to decipher the mutilated sentence. She will fail, and consequently call the book delightful. But should there not have been a marriage previously to this happy awful climax?

Mr. B.—Yes; every thing is arranged for the nuptials—carriages are sent home, jewellery received but not paid for, dresses all tried on, the party invited—nay, assembled in the blue-and-white drawing-room. The reverend father in God, my lord bishop, is standing behind the temporary altar—he has wiped his spectacles, and thumbed his prayer-book—all eyes are turned towards the door, which opens not—the bride faints, for the bridegroom cometh not—he's not "i' the vein"—a something, as like nothing as possible, has given him a disgust that is insurmountable—he flings his happiness to the winds, though he never loved with more outrageous intensity than at the moment he discards his mistress; so he fights three duels with the two brothers and father. He wounds one of

the young men dangerously, the other slightly; fires his pistol in the air when he meets her father—for how could he take the life of him who gave life to his adored one? Your hero can always hit a man just where he pleases—*vide* every novel in Mr. Colburn's collection. The hero becomes misanthropical, the heroine maniacal. The former marries an antiquated and toothless dowager, as an escape from the imaginary disgust he took at a sigh of a matchless woman; and the latter marries an old brute, who threatens her life every night, and puts her in bodily fear every morning, as an indemnity in full for the loss of the man of her affections. They are both romantically miserable; and then come on your tantalizing scenes of delicate distress, and so the end of your third volume, and then finish without any end at all. *Verb. sup. sat.* Or, if you like it better, kill the old dowager of a surfeit, and make the old brute who marries the heroine commit suicide; and, after all these unheard-of trials, marry them as fresh and beautiful as ever.

Arthur.—A thousand thanks. Your *verba* are not thrown to a *sap*. Can I possibly do you any favour for all this kindness?

Mr. B.—Oh, my dear fellow! the very greatest. As I see yours will be, at all points, a most fashionable novel, do me the inestimable favour not to ask me to read it.

WONDERS OF NATURE.—*Formation of soil*.—The first inroads of fertility on barrenness are made by the smaller lichens, which, as Humboldt has well observed, labour to decompose the scorified matter of volcanoes, and the smooth and naked surfaces of sea-deserted rocks, and thus to 'extend the dominion of vitality.' These little plants will often obtain a footing where nothing else could be attached. So small are many that they are invisible to the naked eye, and the decay of these when they have flourished and passed through their transient epochs of existence, is destined to form the first, exuvial layer of vegetable mould; the successive generations give successive increments to that soil from which men are to reap their harvests, and cattle to derive their food; from which forests are destined to spring, and from which future navies are to be supplied. But how is this frail dust to maintain its station on the smooth and polished rock, when vitality has ceased to exert its influence, and the structure which fixed it has decayed? This is the point which has been too generally overlooked, and which is the most wonderful provision of all: the plant, when dying, digs for itself a grave, sculptures in the solid rock a sepulchre in which its dust may rest. For chemistry informs us that not only do these lichens consist in part of gummy matter, which causes their particles to stick together, but that they likewise form, when living, a considerable quantity of oxalic acid; which acid, when by their decay set free, acts upon the rock, and thus is a hollow formed in which the dead matter of the lichen is deposited. Furthermore, the acid, by combining with the lime-stone or other material of the rock, will often produce an important ingredient in the vegetable mould; and not only this, the moisture thus conveyed into the cracks and crevices of rocks and stones, when frozen, rends them, and by continual degradation, [disintegration] adds more and more to the forming soil. Successive generations of these plants successively perform their duties, and at length the barren breakers, or the pumice plains of a volcano, become converted into fruitful fields.—*Prof. Burnett.*

"LITERARY GEMS."—This publication is for sale in single numbers at two cents each, or six and a quarter cents for four copies, stitched in a cover, at 205 Broadway, 16 Merchants' Exchange, and by Booksellers. A liberal discount to wholesale purchasers.

NEW YORK MAY, 1833.